

Lord George Hamilton, in reply, declined to state the amount of the sinking fund, which he thought might rather to be increased to £40,000 than reduced.

A long conference followed, but no definite agreement was arrived at. The representatives of Victoria are firm in their opposition to any proposal for the establishment of a sinking fund.

The delegates will visit the ordnance manufactory at Elswick during Easter, and will proceed to Portsmouth on the 13th instant.

BANQUET TO THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATES.

LONDON, 3rd April.

A grand banquet was given last night by the Imperial Federation League to the Australian delegates to the conference, all of whom were present, together with a numerous company of distinguished guests. The Duke of Cambridge, in commanding upon the home and colonial forces, declared that the security of the Empire depended upon the federation of Great Britain and her colonial and other possessions. Mr. Edward Stanhope spoke on the subject of the empire, in which he said it was the blood of the whole empire. He baled out the world in England and the colonies thoroughly understanding each other. Sir F. Dillon Bell hoped that the conference would obviate any misunderstandings as had occurred in connection with the New Hebrides. Mr. Deskin, pointedly alluding to the question, declared that the Australian colonies were resolved to be masters of the Pacific Ocean.

THE PACIFIC FEDERATION LEAGUE.

LONDON, 3rd March.

A meeting of the Imperial Federation League was held to-day at the Mansion House. A large number of representative men were present. Mr. James Service, who was among the speakers, said that the desire of the colonies was that the Imperial Government should give due consideration to their wants, and that the colonies, in turn, would be willing to have a large extent granted to sink their own individual interests for the general good of the Empire. Referring to affairs in the Pacific Mr. Service declared that the treatment received by the colonies at the hands of the Imperial Government with respect to New Guinea and the New Hebrides questions had caused some discontent, as it was thought the Government had yielded too easily to the wishes of foreign countries.

THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO CANNES.

LONDON, 31st March.

The Queen will not reach Cannes till tomorrow, having been delayed at La Roche, near Ansouis, owing to the train in which her Majesty was travelling catching fire.

LATER.—THE LEGISLATION FOR IRELAND.

LONDON, 30th March.

In the course of the debate on the Crimes Bill in the House of Commons last night, Mr. Gladstone said that the existing condition of Ireland did not justify the financial steps proposed in the bill. The bill would brand the Irish people as inferior to the rest of the people of the United Kingdom. Mr. Goschen declared that the Irish National League had destroyed the efficiency of the jury system in that country. The Conservative and Unionist press approved of the general principles of the bill, except that portion which provides for the transfer of trials to England, which will probably be resisted by Lord Justice.

THE ROSS-AFGHAN FRONTIER NEGOTIATIONS.

LONDON, 23rd March.

Colonel Sir Joseph West Ridgway and Captain Barrow have started for St. Petersburg, for the purpose of commencing negotiations with respect to the points which are still undetermined relative to the Russian-Afghan frontier, at Kandahar and Khoja Sula.

MOVEMENTS OF THE DUKES OF CONNAUGHT.

BONHAR, 1st April.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught left Bombay last night for Poona, whence he proceeds to Maharashtra.

DESTRUCTIVE HURRICANE AT DHAMO.

MANDALAY, 8th April.

On the night of the 4th instant, a destructive hurricane, which is described as the most formidable ever experienced in that part of the world, struck the coast of the Bay of Bengal.

THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.

LONDON, 27th March.

The Duchess of Cumberland, sister of the Queen of Russia, is suffering from melancholia resulting from shock to the system caused by the news of the recent attempt on the life of the Tsar of Russia.

THE DUKE OF CUMBRIA.

LONDON, 27th March.

Lord Salisbury has declared that a return to a protective policy in the United Kingdom is outside the range of practical politics.

HER MAJESTY THE EMPEROR WILLIAM.

BERLIN, 27th March.

His Majesty the Emperor William is suffering from a cold caught at the recent birthday festivities. Inflammation of the eye has set in.

THE FEDERAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

LONDON, 28th March.

The Federal Fire Insurance Company, which was originally founded in 1851, has been incorporated for a period of six months afterwards. The particulars of the delayed cases where the insurance of the term can be shown. Landlords are also exempted from payment of rates when the rents are not received owing to indomitable.

THREATS AGAINST THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

LONDON, 30th March.

It is reported that a box in which there was a pistol suspended from a chain of mercury, has been sent to Mr. A. J. Balfour, Chief Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Balfour has frequently been warned by anonymous letters to prepare for death.

LONDON, 31st March.

The report that a box containing explosive material was sent to Mr. Balfour has been found to be a hoax.

THE PROSECUTION OF MESSRS. DILLON AND O'BRIEN.

LONDON, 3rd April.

The prosecutions against Mr. Dillon, M.P., and Mr. O'Brien, for inciting tenants in Ireland not to pay rent, have been abandoned by the Government.

THE "KAPUNDA" DISASTER.

LONDON, 30th March.

The mate of the barque *Ada McLean*, has been severely wounded by the explosion of a mine into the collision between that vessel and the *Kapunda*. William Cottrell, the first mate of the *Kapunda*, has been commendable for his bravery. The crew condemn the captain of the *Ada McLean*, whose certificate was suspended for two years.

LODGE, 1st April.

The Board of Trade has decided to prosecute the captain of the barque *Ada McLean*, which collided with the ship *Kapunda*, bound for Fremantle with emigrants, 400 miles from Balao, resulting in the sinking of the latter with great loss of life.

ACCIDENT TO THE P. & O. STEAMER "ROMA."

LONDON, 26th March.

The Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Co., owned jointly by Australia, grounded at Port Said on Wednesday, during a heavy gale, and sustained some injury to the hull. The rudder, thereby rendering it necessary for her to return to Malta, to dock and repair the damage. The passengers and crew have since been transferred to the company's steamer *Mirrored*, which left Colombo this morning.

THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW IN ENGLAND.

LONDON, 6th April.

Large bodies of volunteers are marching to Dover and Eastbourne, to take part in the Easter manoeuvres.

ENGLAND AND TURKEY.

CONSTANTINOPLE, 10th April.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's proposals are now better appreciated by the Turks, and moreover, the opposition of some of the Powers thereof has been lessened.

GREAT DEFEAT OF THE DEUTSCHES IN DONGOLA.

ASWAN, 10th April.

Now has been received here that the friendly Kabbashid Tribe have had an engagement with the Dervishes, near Dongola; and, after severe fighting, completely defeated the latter. It is expected that, in consequence of this reverse, the Dervishes will shortly evacuate Dongola, and will return to Khartoum.

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND AND THE FISHERMEN QUESTION.

WASHINGTON, 9th April.

The Fisheries Union of Gloucester have suggested to President Cleveland that reprisals should only be partially enforced in carrying out the new Fishery Law. President Cleveland, in his reply, stated that reprisals are intended to be directed to assert the national honour and prestige, and not to the nation and not any particular interests.

THE THREATENED BOMBARDMENT OF HATTAN PORTS.

LONDON, 9th April.

It is reported that in satisfaction of an old pecuniary claim against the Republic of Hayti, England has demanded theession of the Island of Tortuga from the Republic, failing which the British Government threatened to bombard the Haytian ports. There is great excitement at Port-au-Prince as well as at other places, and the Haytians are threatening the lives of foreigners.

REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY IN SPAIN.

MADRID, 23rd March.

Intelligence has been conveyed to the Government that there is a strong revolutionary activity in Spain. Inquiries have been made as to the discovery of a widespread conspiracy to overthrow the present Monarchy. A large number of persons have been arrested here and in Barcelona and elsewhere for complicity in the movement. Vigorous action is being taken by the authorities to stamp out the disaffection.

LONDON, 4th April.

An attempt has been made to blow up the

Chamber of Deputies in Madrid by means of dynamite. The plot, however, was discovered before any damage was done.

AUSTRIA AND ROMANIA.

LONDON, 5th March.

Austria has declined to admit Romania against violation by Russia.

ENGLAND AND GERMANY.

LONDON, 5th March.

M. de Giorgi the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, is vainly endeavouring to prevent expressions of hostility to Germany by M. Kastell, editor of the *Moscow Gazette*; and one of the principal advisers of the Czar.

THE DIALOGUE.

LONDON, 5th April.

M. Kastell has been rebuked by the Czar, but was afterwards invited to His Majesty's table.

THE DIALOGUE.

LONDON, 5th April.

The whole of the Russian press is urging the withdrawal of Russia from the alliance with Germany.

RICH DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN ALASKA.

LONDON, 5th April.

A rich discovery of gold has been made on the Yukon River, near Alaska, in North America.

THE TONGAN AFFAIR.

LAKELAND, 29th March.

Sir Charles Mitchell, High Commissioner of Western Pacific, left Fiji in H.M.S. *Diamond* on the 24th instant, for Tonga to inquire into the recent disturbances. He was accompanied by Child, Judicial Commissioner.

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EXTRA ACTS.

A STRIKE OF PRIESTS.

The Echo says:—"A remarkable strike is going on in the Island of Chios. The population in some of the parishes belonging to the Orthodox Greek Church have been höchst in the due payment of tithes, or Church rates, or some other ecclesiastical dues. The priests have appealed to the Bishop of Chios, who has attempted to help his clergy by putting the recalcitrant parishes under the interdict. As a consequence of this extreme measure, with which Western Europe was familiar in the Middle Ages, the clerics are obliged to abstain from the regular exercise of their ministry; they may neither baptise, marry, celebrate Mass, nor even bury the dead. The laity have taken this last duty upon themselves, and there have been several funerals without any ecclesiastical ceremony. They have appealed to the secular Governor of the Island, however, requesting him to compel the priests to strike to return to their duty. The Governor has applied to the Porte for direction in this delicate question; so that the final settlement of the quarrel between the Christian pastors and their flock is now resting in the hands of the Grand Turk."

NAPOLEON TRYING ON HIS CROWN.

One morning, in the month of November, 1802, according to this authority, M. Nitot, the Emperor's silversmith, was soon entering the Tuilleries Palace, carrying a small package on his left arm. A hailing one of the Imperial lackeys, he asked if he could see His Majesty.

"His Majesty is not yet out of bed," was the reply.

"Please announce to his Majesty," said M. Nitot, "that I should like to speak with him."

The silversmith was soon afterward ushered into the Imperial bedroom, where Napoleon and his wife, Josephine, were still enjoying their repose, the former wearing a kerchief around his head and the latter a nightcap.

"Oh! tis you, Papa Nitot!" exclaimed Napoleon. "Good day, Papa Nitot; any news?"

"Sir, I come to try it."

"The crown for your coronation, sire."

Whereupon Napoleon flung the kerchief to the other end of the chamber, raised himself on his arms and was crowned there and then most respectfully by the silversmith.

"It goes well," said His Majesty. "It doesn't fit."

"Yes, my friend, very well," was Josephine's reply.

"But you must see if it fits you also," he exclaimed to his wife, taking off the crown from his own head and placing it tenderly on hers, after having relieved his Imperial spouse of the rather democratic cap she had been wearing. The crown proved to be as good a fit for the Empress as for the Emperor, and both were delighted with Papa Nitot's dexterity in its manufacture.—*Musée des Familles.*

THE GUYANA BLOW GUN.

THE ZIRATANA OF THE MACOURSES.

Almost the first exercise of ingenuity and skill by the savages is in the formation of a missile weapon suitable to his peculiar needs. Hence it is we see such a variety of bizarre yet effective weapons in use among the savage tribes of the world. Where the conditions are right, a smooth stone projected from the hand may suffice; but the places are very few where the kind of stones, game, and surroundings harmonise so well that no further effort of ingenuity is needed. The rule is that many difficulties must be overcome before weapon is produced which fits the needs of the man whose very life is at stake.

It has been said that the honouring is the most remarkable result of savage ingenuity and skill in the making of a missile weapon; but it seems that even that singular instrument must yield first to the ziratana, or blow gun of the Macourse Indians of Guyana. The ziratana and its several accompaniments make a series absolutely unique, in that they so clearly portray the efforts successfully made to overcome a number of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Being at once the swiftest and warmest portion of the globe, Guyana is characterised by a vegetation so rank as to defy the utmost efforts even of civilised man to control it. Ordinary missiles are of little use in its tangled forests; for scarcely an animal fits for food lives elsewhere than among the branches of the lofty trees. Even the large animals, as the jaguar and puma, lurk in the trees, and are not only wounded with difficulty, but if wounded can easily drag themselves away to some leafy cover, there to die, or perhaps recover undiscovred. The missile needed is one which is silent and thus fatal, no matter what the animal or where it is struck. A vital particle seldom so closely as the marksman, owing to the opportunity for hiding afforded by the dense foliage. Consequently the missile must be fatal though it only puncture the flesh. This, of course, involves the use of poison, but of such a poison as will be burned less when fired.

The steps by which the Macourse accomplished his blow gun, with its instantly fatal poison, are of course unknown; but it is safe to say that, in all their elaborateness, they are the work of years.

The blow gun itself is a tube about three-quarters of an inch in diameter and 11 ft. long. It weighs a trifle more than a pound and a half. The tube is made up of two tubes, one within the other; the object of the inner tube being to supply as nearly perfect a cylinder as may be, and that is found in a comparatively frail aquatic reed called osaria. The outer tube is made of the stem of a young palm tree of the genus *Areca*, and known as *Stenocarpus*. The said act also is a back sight. The fore sight is made of two upper incisor teeth of the aequo. These are made from the midrib of the leaves of the concolor palm, and are peculiar from their hardness and weight. They are not larger than a knitting needle, and are bound at the base with a tuft of cotton procured from the tree *Zombas celtis*. This makes the missile fit the gun snugly—a prime necessity for correctness and strength of flight. The arrow is pointed by drawing it between the teeth of the pinfish, one half of whose lower jaw forms a necessary part of the Macourse's outfit. The weapon is now complete, but will be almost harmless without the famous poison, the manufacture of which is held a secret among the conjurers of the Macourse Indians. The chief characteristic of this wondrous poison is its instantaneous action. It does not kill instantly; but it seems to paralyse first, and then cause death slowly and painlessly. The consequence is that a creature smitten with it is unable to move even an inch, but falls to the ground from the very spot on which it was struck. The composition of the poison, as given by Waterton, is peculiar. Some of the ingredients he could not learn; but the most important is the wouassi-vine (*strychnos toosendan*). Two or three other plants are used—among them red pepper and hyssop, the latter belonging to the genus *lunaria*.

THE Undersigned Agents for Messrs. E. E. ABRAHAMSON & Co., Sandakan, British North Borneo, are now prepared to submit for inspection Samples of hard and soft TIMBERS suitable for Wharves, Building and General purposes.

GIBB, LIVINGSTON & Co., Agents. Hongkong, 2nd November, 1886.

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